

GM4WOMEN2028

PARTICIPATION GROUP

BRIEFING NOTE 2023

Key Scorecard Indicators - Participation in formal politics and the law

This year there is a fall in our key indicator for women's representation in formal

politics. **2021 Scorecard:**

- **Indicator 1: The number of women with voting rights around the Mayor's cabinet table.** In 2021 The percentage of women with voting rights around the Mayor's cabinet table doubled from 2020, rising to 36%, with four of Greater Manchester's boroughs led by women.
- **Indicator 2: The percentage of women appointed as judges in the North West.** In 2020-21 this was 35%, which compared to women accounting for 44% of those recommended for an appointment across England and Wales.

2022 Scorecard:

- **Indicator 1: The number of women with voting rights around the Mayor's cabinet table.** The number of women with voting rights around the Mayor's cabinet table fell to 18% after the May 2022 elections as only two of Greater Manchester's boroughs are now led by women.
- **Indicator 2: The percentage of women appointed as judges in the North West.** **There was no change.** The percentage of women appointed as judges in the North West in 2021/22 stayed the same at 35%, with women accounting for 44% of those recommended for an appointment across England and Wales, again with no change from last year. There were only 5% of ethnic minority appointments compared to 9% for England and Wales and this data is not gender disaggregated. **



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More than half of our Boroughs have women chief executives (60%), a higher rate than the national figure of 49%*. We have a higher percentage of women councillors across our region at 42% (272 of 645 councillors) against a national average of 35%. Representation of councillors who are women of colour remains at 5% - which is the same as the national figure of 5% and is lower than would be representative of women of colour by population. There is significant variation between Greater Manchester councils in the percentage of councillors who are women of colour.

The figure on women's cabinet representation in Greater Manchester is very disappointing. Who sits round the Mayor's cabinet table is dependent upon the result of elections in the ten boroughs in Greater Manchester which then determines the party which takes control, and then also the internal elections within the councillor group of that party to select the leader of the council. These elections are beyond the Mayor's control. The Mayor was asked at a recent Women and Girls Equality Panel meeting what steps he could take to mitigate these outcomes and ensure better representation in the cabinet. Andy Burnham reconfirmed his commitment, set out in the GM constitution, requiring each borough to nominate a women deputy executive councillor to achieve gender balance. The deputy cabinet members attend the cabinet and have speaking rights. The GM constitution also ensures statutory committees and other boards have balanced gender representation and the Mayor recently appointed a new woman Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, Kate Green who replaces Bev Hughes in this role. The Mayor also committed to attend Panel meetings twice a year. These mitigating arrangements are helpful but there is clearly an issue of underrepresentation of the talent, ambition and contribution to be made by the region's leaders and one which the political parties need to address.

For our second indicator, the percentage of women appointed as judges in the North West in 2021/22 was 35%, this compares to women accounting for 44% of those recommended for an appointment across England and Wales, with no change from last year. There were only 5% of ethnic minority appointments compared to 9% for England and Wales and this data is not gender disaggregated. **

*Source for all national data <https://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/sex-power-2022>

**Source – Ministry of Justice Official Statistics, Diversity of the Judiciary
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/diversity-of-the-judiciary-2022-statistics>



Political Representation in Greater Manchester – by Gender and Ethnicity* **

No of women % of all Councillors No of women of colour % of all cllrs GM Councils 2021
255 (of 643) 40% 23 (3%) GM councils 2022 268 (of 645) 41% 32 (5%) GM Councils 2023
272 (of 645) 42% 30 (5%)

***Source – local authority websites accessed 5 Jan 2023 following methodology used by Operation Black Vote and the Fawcett Society in previous audits. We echo the caveats expressed by OBV and Fawcett with this method of data collection where self-identification was not possible as an imperfect method but necessary to monitor change. We would urge councils to collect and make available better data on representation using self-identification.

Participation, Representation, Care and Voice – Agendas for action

Over the last year the Participation Group has continued to meet online to identify opportunities to campaign for change on our priority agendas: maternity, paternity, parental and/or adoption leave for councillors; informal care and informal campaigning; the experience of care and the under-representation of Women of Colour as Councillors. This year we were really pleased to work with academics Rosie Shorrocks and Anna Sanders as they undertook a comprehensive survey of GM women providing invaluable information about how women are engaged in political activities and what barriers might prevent greater involvement****.

What Women Want Report - having a voice and barriers to participation

The survey findings confirmed that the cost of living, including the costs of transport and childcare are the most pressing issues for women in Greater Manchester particularly younger women and women from some parts of the region. The survey also confirms that caring responsibilities impact on the ability to be politically active. And whilst not all women want to be active, the findings also highlight some of the barriers that exist where they do.

The information is helpful for understanding how GM4women2028 as a campaigning coalition itself can try to overcome barriers to participation. Participation rates vary across the Boroughs and suggest that GM4women2028's strategy of holding events in different Boroughs is important and needs to continue. In the survey responses, younger women are more likely to say they did not know about the opportunities available to get involved or that they did not always feel welcome. Likewise, women from a minority ethnic background were more likely to say they didn't feel welcome compared to white women. The lessons for the GM4women campaign are that connecting and welcoming younger women, and women of colour, in our campaigns must be priorities going forward.

In addition, the calls to action from the participation group are:

1. Councils to collect and make publicly available equality and diversity information on their councillors.
2. Councils to put formal policies in place to support councilors as parents and carers - and GMCA to monitor through the Women and Girls Equality Panel.
3. Party leaders and council administrations to share what they are doing to encourage and support women, and especially women of colour, into political leadership positions e.g. do they have specific career pathways, leadership training, mentoring, policies to address barriers to participation (How monitored? Diversity reporting?)

****'Shorrocks, R. and Sanders, A. (2023), 'What women want: Capturing women's diverse experiences and perspectives across Greater Manchester' published in partnership with the University of Manchester and the University of York.

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The members of the participation group feel the time pressures of combining care with campaigning around participation! We would love to welcome new members and develop our activities to make sure they are welcoming, so do please get in touch with us!

To contact the authors or to join GM4Wom group to discuss the challenge of decent work for women in Greater Manchester Contact: gm4women2028@gmail.com

